

The reported presence of three historic sites was also noteworthy, not only because they lengthened the timespan of human occupation and provided opportunity for examining greatly contrasting modes of human adaptation, but also because little archeological research has involved historic sites anywhere in the Southern Appalachians. It was anticipated that there was considerable possibility for examining the adaptations of early settlers who moved into the Valley in the late eighteenth century and changes that these settlers underwent (and wrought) as time progressed through the next centuries. In the end, this was impossible since two of the three recorded historic sites did not exist in the archeological record. Possibly, they did not exist at all since there was no conclusive documentary evidence that they had been located within the project area. Although this reduced some of the comparative ability of the research, it did make it clear that site identification based on tradition and hear-say, no matter how well informed, is questionable.

#### PREHISTORIC SITES

Fifteen prehistoric sites were examined during the 1981 archeological survey of the Access Area. Eleven of these had been recorded during previous surveys although the prehistoric component was not always recognized. For example, two sites (31A171 and 31A172) were recorded as historic sites during the 1976 survey (Robertson and Robertson 1978). One of these was primarily historic but the other was primarily prehistoric. Only nine of the 15 sites were the principal focus of the 1981 project. The other six were investigated in a cursory fashion only as they impinged on the park development areas. Several isolated prehistoric finds or small clusters of artifacts were encountered but these were not designated sites.

The two largest sites were located in the New River floodplain and had been recorded previously. 31A178, in the northern half of the floodplain (Figure 3), had been divided into three sites during the 1976 survey (31A178, 31A179, and 31A180) but no real basis was found for this distinction. Artifact occurrence was continuous over the entire area and no distinct boundaries marking the 1976 sites could be discovered. For these reasons, only one site was recognized during 1981 and it was assigned the lowest of the three numbers assigned in 1976 (i.e. 31A178).

31A178 covers roughly 24.5 acres (9.9 ha) as it is currently defined. The site is confined to the second terrace of the floodplain although artifact concentration appears to be greatest on the higher ridges of the terrace in the bend area. Artifacts were confined primarily to the plowzone but some sub-disturbance artifacts were recovered. It does not appear that there are any deeply buried deposits (that is, no more than 3 ft below surface) but different testing techniques would be required to bear this out. No cultural features were encountered in any of the test units but some may have escaped the plow.

Artifacts recovered from all field work, past and present, indicate human occupation from the Early/Middle Archaic through the Late Woodland (ca. 8000 B.C. - A.D. 1400 or later). It should be noted that re-analysis of the 1976 survey materials is currently in progress and that this may change the interpretation of the occupation period. The "Late Woodland" as used in this paper refers more to a way of life than to a particular